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# RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN AND IN THE FORT POINT CHANNEL AREA; SITE POTENTIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

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# RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN AND IN THE FORT POINT CHANNEL AREA; SITE POTENTIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

## I. Site Potential

This study evaluates the residential potential in downtown, classifying the potential in the following categories:

- Existing underutilized buildings and small "infill" lots.
- Large subareas and parcels with project proposals.
- Fort Point Channel area.

### Structures and Infill

The potential of existing underutilized commercial buildings has been classified in a preceding survey (A Survey of the Downtown Residential Potential, April 85, BRA) including those structures in C, D, and E building condition (fair, poor, very poor) considered suitable for residential use. All the small "infill" lots were proposed for residential use. The survey areas were made up of Bulfinch Triangle, Tremont-on-the-Common, Custom House District, Leather District, Bay Village, Chinatown, Theatre District, Boylston Street and St. Botolph Street (Map No. 1).

### Large Parcels

The large subareas and parcels consist of (1) all the large residential development sites in Downtown having more than an acre size and (2) substantive residential development proposals subject to approval from the BRA (Map No. 2).

Fort Point Channel

The Fort Point Channel area includes all the open space/large sites and existing buildings between Fort Point Channel, Northern Avenue, C Street and Gillette Park. The categories were subclassified as follows:

a. residential potential by conversion of all the vacant and occupied buildings in C, D, and E condition;

b. the small "infill" lots in the built-up area; and

c. the large parcels, mostly covering the former Penn Central Transportation areas (Map No. 3).

The criteria used in calculating the potential size of each dwelling unit for all the categories was to attribute to each unit an average of 1,000 gross square feet. For the potential number of dwellings on a vacant lot we used existing or proposed F.A.R.

## II. Implementation

### Existing Structures and Small "Infill" Lots

Findings of the market and cost feasibility (Residential Development Market and Cost Feasibility Study, Downtown, September 1985, BRA) indicate that the residential development potential in Downtown on small "infill" lots or in existing underutilized buildings is approximately 4,100 dwelling units. A supplementary market and cost study on the same area enabled us to compare the results of cost and market values.

In our case studies, we used an average rehabilitation cost of $60/G.S.F.(Gross Square Feet); an interest on construction loans of 14 percent and interest on long-term mortgages between 10 percent and 12 percent.

The market survey found 1-bedroom dwelling rents between $680-$1,120 and the case study yielded costs between $850 and $1,300 for one-bedroom units; for 2-bedroom dwellings, the market rents are $770-$1,750 and the case study cost requirements called for rents of $950-$1,500. The two complementary aspects--market and cost--point to the conclusion that there is a real potential for rental units in Downtown.

For owner-occupied units, the 1-bedroom market ranges between $70,000-$150,000, and the case studies show a cost between $60,000-$135,000; for the 2-bedroom market, the actual price ranged between $120,000-$400,000 while the case study costs hover between $78,000-$165,000.

The conclusion is that the market for residential use is almost but not quite strong enough, and additional leverage might be needed to assure, or favor residential development. This additional leverage could take the form of preferential zoning and measures to lower the interest rate on residential development for short- and long-term loans.

The study did not include provisions for low/moderate income rent/sale units in these projects. A way to insert a share of low/moderate income units (5%-10%) would be to establish inclusionary zoning, "linkage", special easements for existing buildings, and special programs such as SHARP.

Large Sites and Parcels

The 12 large parcels with more than an acre each provide a total residential potential of between 5,700 and 8,800 dwelling units. Almost all the parcels have at least one development proposal. For some proposals, with a low residential ratio, the suggested residential portion was increased and the commercial/retail portion decreased. All the existing projects are subject to city approval. In order to assure that these projects will be utilized for residential development and contribute to the city housing goals, preferential zoning and inclusionary zoning would have to be adopted. This will have an impact on the market and cost feasibility. In this study, low/moderate income units were projected to make up 10 percent of the total number of dwelling units.

As mentioned before, the potential number of dwelling units is estimated at between 5,900 and 8,700, including a low/moderate income household share of between 850 and 1,300 dwellings.

Fort Point Channel Area

This area includes all the buildings and small "infill" lots between buildings. Part of the buildings are former light and middle industrial structures, partially vacant today. The existing "texture" today is a mixed use of light industrial, office, commercial, housing and special housing/studio uses.

The other resource for housing is the approximate 5,000,000 square feet of vacant land area of the former Penn Central Transportation Company. The total residential potential in both resources range between 18,000 and 25,000 dwelling units. As in the case of the previously reviewed categories, a future study on market and development cost would have to be done on this area.

In essence, preferential and inclusionary zoning would be required here, also. The large number of dwelling units which potentially could be built so close to the Downtown's financial core suggest the need for a major neighborhood planning study on the significance of such a magnitude of housing development and the means for achieving it.

III. Summary of Findings

This analysis indicates that the housing potential in Downtown is at least 28,000, including 17,000 units in Fort Point Channel. This potential flows mainly from privately-owned properties and does not include properties owned by the BRA or the Public Facilities Department. It also clearly indicates that much of the total potential for housing is on large parcels rather than on existing underutilized buildings or small "infill" lots.

Table 1

TOTAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN DOWNTOWN AND FORT POINT CHANNEL

| Category | Total Number of Dwelling Units |
|---|---|
| 1. Small "Infill" Lots and Existing Buildings | 3,650 |
| 2. Large Sites and Parcels | 5,720 |
| 3. Fort Point Channel | 16,200 |
| Total Number of Dwellings | 25,600 |

Table 2

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL ON
SMALL "INFILL" LOTS AND EXISTING BUILDINGS

| District | | Number of Dwelling Units |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bulfinch Triangle | 900 |
| 2. | Custom House District | (310)* |
| 3. | Tremont District | 220 |
| 4. | Theatre District | 1,310 |
| 5. | Leather District | 275 |
| 6. | Chinatown | 1,025 |
| 7. | Bay Village | 370 |
| 8. | Boylston Street | (160)* |
| 9. | St. Botolph Street | (40)* |
| | Total Number of Dwellings | 4,100 |

( )* Not in the boundaries of the "Residential Development Market and Cost Feasibility Study, Downtown, September 1985).

Table 3

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL ON
LARGE SITES OR PARCELS

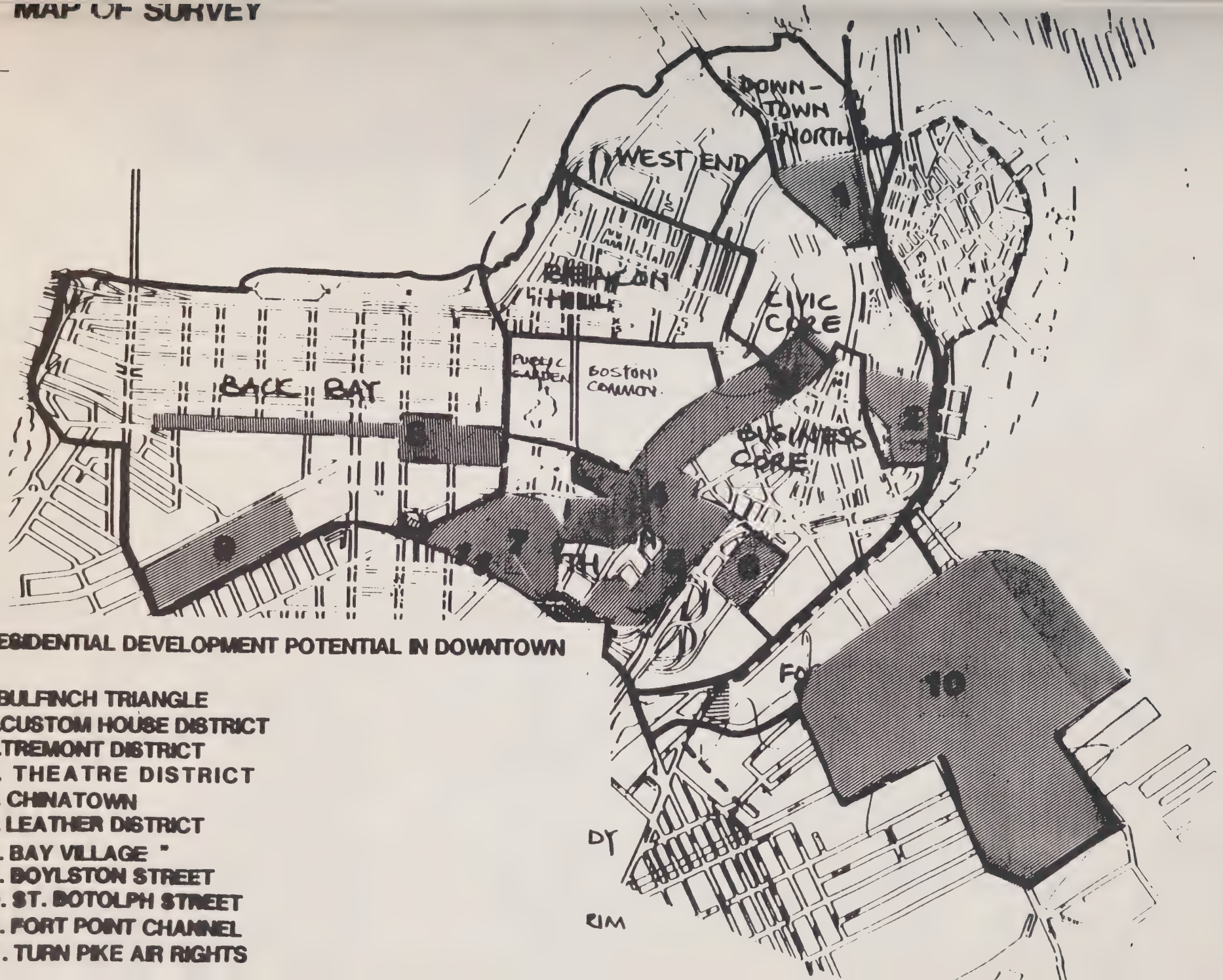
| Project | Existing Floor Area Ratio | Land Square Feet | Total Gross Square Feet | No. of Dwelling Units | No. of Dwelling Units for Low/ Moderate Income | Alternative Floor Area Ratio | Total Alternative No. of Dwelling Units | Alternative Dwelling Units for Low/ Moderate Income | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tent City | B-2 | 140,000 | 280,000 | 280 | 200 | H-3 | 400 | 250 | Proposals for 264 D. Us. on 235,000 G.S.F. |
| Prudential Project | B-3 | | 300,000 | 300 | 30 | | 700 | 70 | |
| Park Plaza Renewal | B-10 | 43,000 | 240,000 | 240 | 24 | B-10 | 430 | 43 | Limit 125', 13 Floors, BRA Parcel |
| Arlington/Hadassah | B-10 | 46,607 | 500,000 | 90 | | | 90 | | |
| Mass Turnpike A. R. Cohen Project | B-3 | 44,128 | 133,000 | 133 | 13 | B-6 | 265 | 26 | |
| Mass Turnpike A. R. Cohen Parcel C,D | B-3 | 304,000 | 912,000 | 912 | 91 | B-4 | 1,210 | 121 | |
| Hurley Site | B-8 | 80,000 | 200,00 | 200 | 20 | H-3 | 240 | 24 | |
| Fan Piers, 1,2,3,4 | W-2 | | 1,300,000 | 1,300 | 130 | H-5 | 1,800 | 180 | 1,000 Dwelling Units on Piers 1,2,3 800 on Pier 4. |
| Lowell Square | H-3 | 69,463 | 108,000 | 210 | 21 | H-5 | 350 | 35 | BRA Parcel |
| Boston Garden | I-2 | 527,500 | 1,700,000 | 1,700 | 170 | B-3 | 2,850 | 285 | Mixed Ownership, Parcels 3,5,5[1],6 |
| Don Bosco | B-4-11 | | 280,000 | 280 | 55 | | 400 | 280 | |
| Back Bay | B-3 | 25,000 | 80,000 | 75 | | | 75 | | |
| Total | | | | 5,720 | 754 | | 8,810 | 1,314 | |

Table 4

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN
FORT POINT CHANNEL

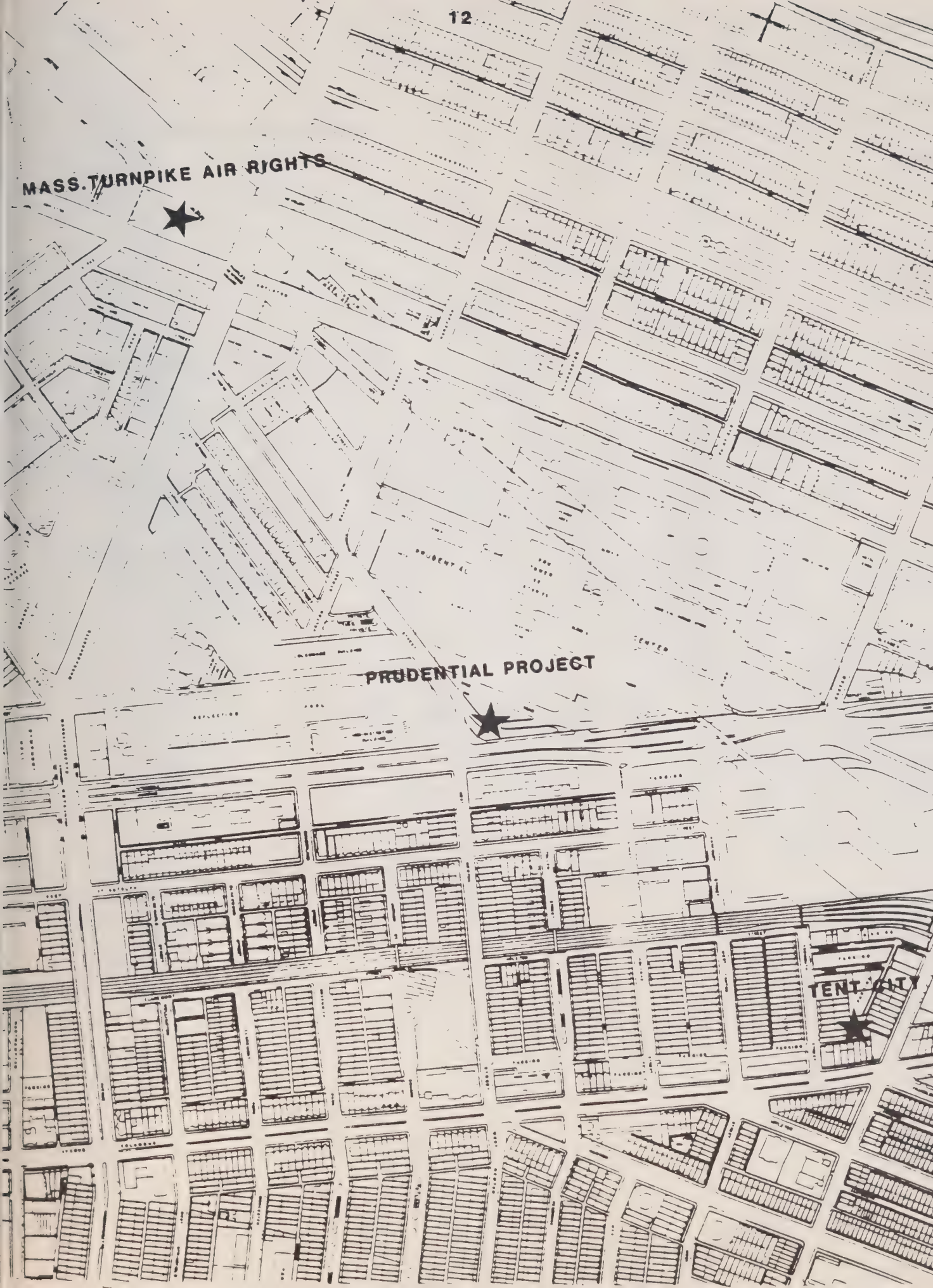
| Category | Gross Square Feet | Total Number of Dwelling Units |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Small "Infill" Sites | 1,584,000 | 1,848 |
| 2. Existing Buildings | 4,207,000 | 4,055 |
| 3. Large Sites | 10,150,000 | 10,150 |
| Total Dwelling Units | | 16,200 |

MAP OF SURVEY



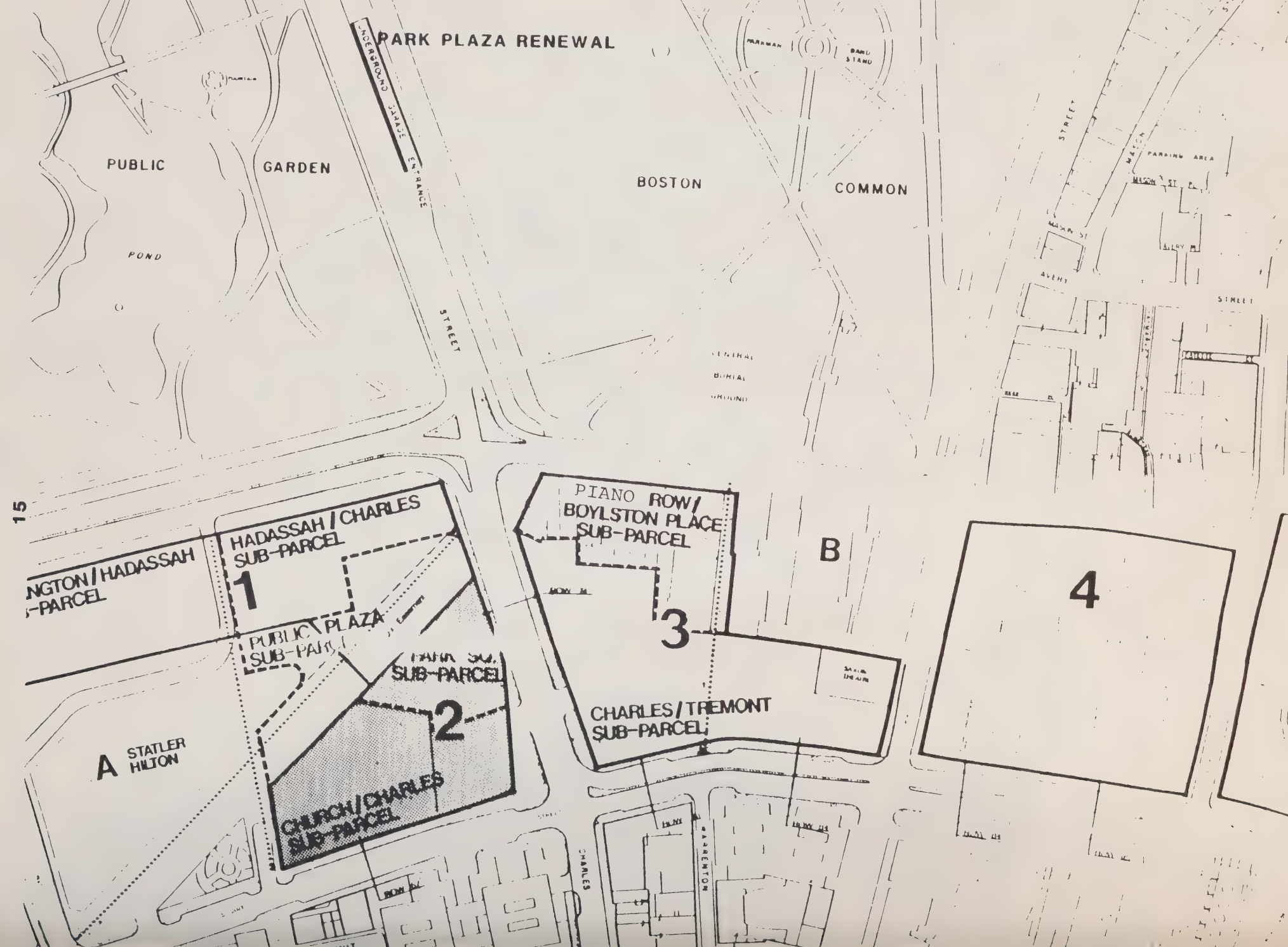

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN DOWNTOWN

1. BULFINCH TRIANGLE
2. CUSTOM HOUSE DISTRICT
3. TREMONT DISTRICT
4. THEATRE DISTRICT
5. CHINATOWN
6. LEATHER DISTRICT
7. BAY VILLAGE "
8. BOYLSTON STREET
9. ST. BOTOLPH STREET
10. FORT POINT CHANNEL
11. TURN PIKE AIR RIGHTS


MASS. TURNPIKE AIR RIGHTS
PRUDENTIAL PROJECT
TENT CITY

ARLLINGTON-HADASSAH
BOSTON
COMMO
PARK PLAZA RENEWAL
DON-BOSCO PROJECT

BOSTON GARDEN
LOWELL-SQUARE
HURLEY SITE


PARK PLAZA RENEWAL
PUBLIC
GARDEN
POND
BOSTON
COMMON
STREET
PARKING AREA
15
HADASSAH / CHARLES
SUB-PARCEL
1
PUBLIC PLAZA
SUB-PARCEL
SUB-PARCEL
2
A
STATLER
HILTON
CHURCH / CHARLES
SUB-PARCEL
PIANO ROW /
BOYLSTON PLACE
SUB-PARCEL
B
3
CHARLES / TREMONT
SUB-PARCEL
4

TON

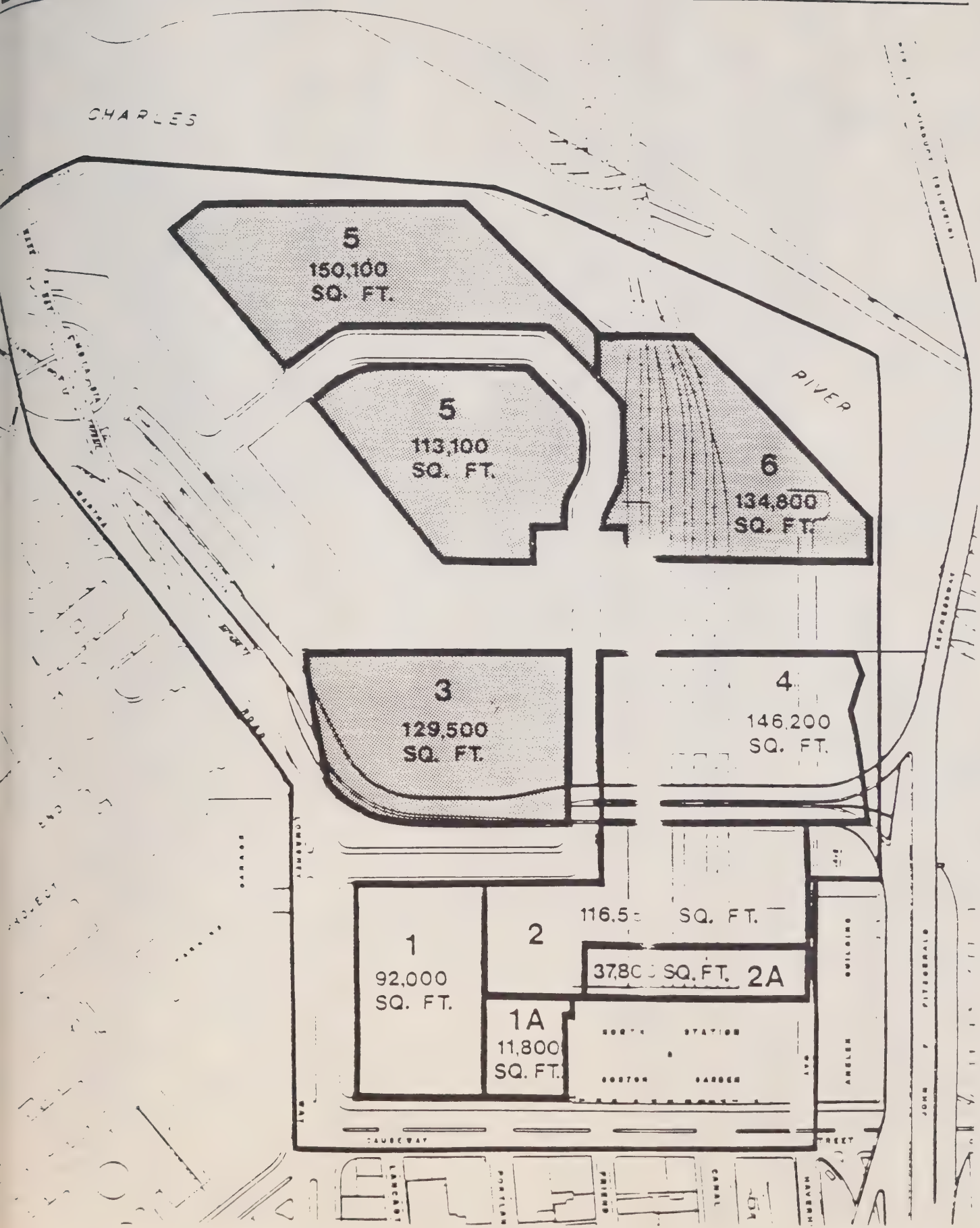
METRIC SURVEY

LOWELL SQUARE

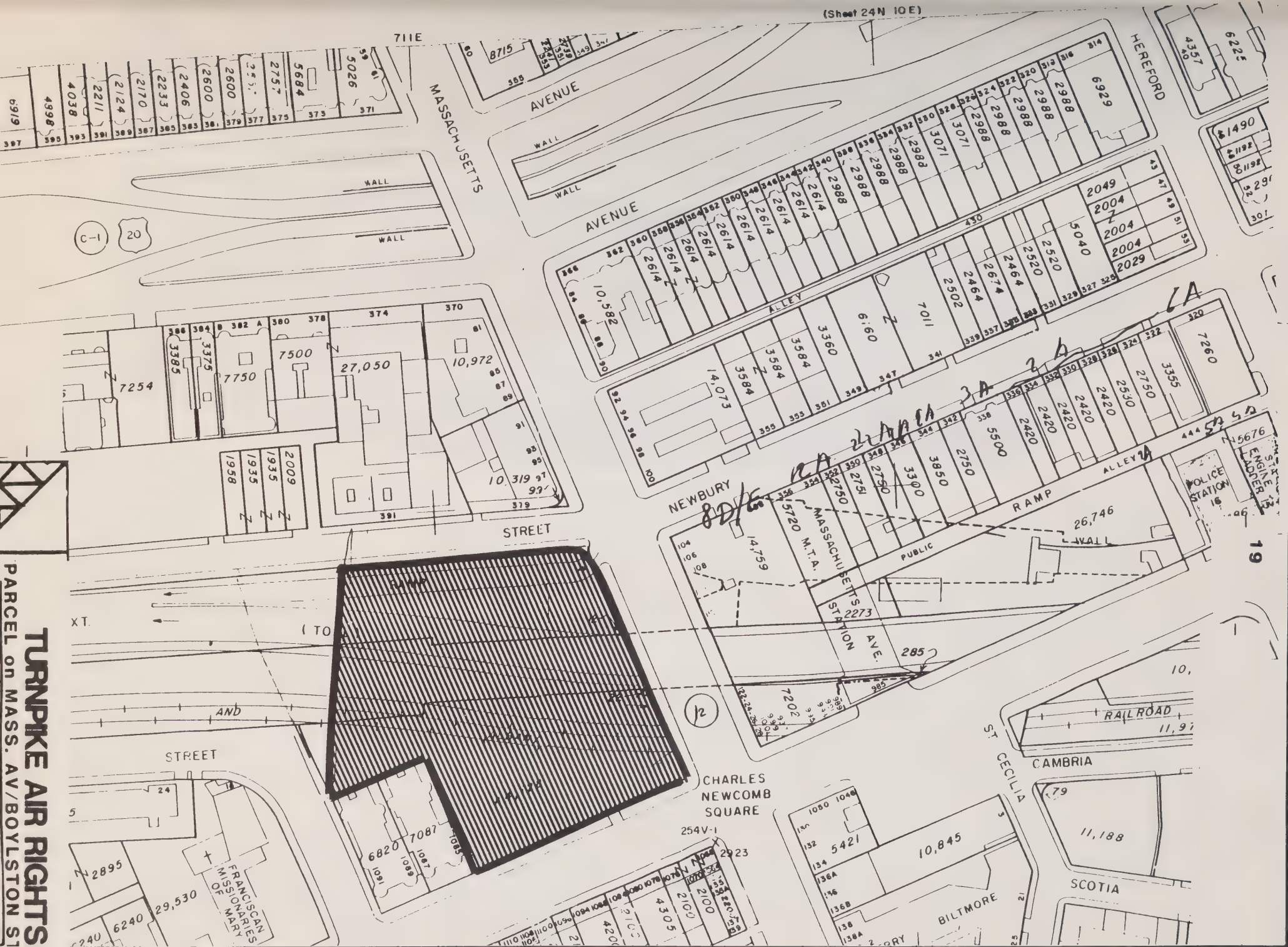
NORTH STATION REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

BOSTON GARDEN 2 - 3

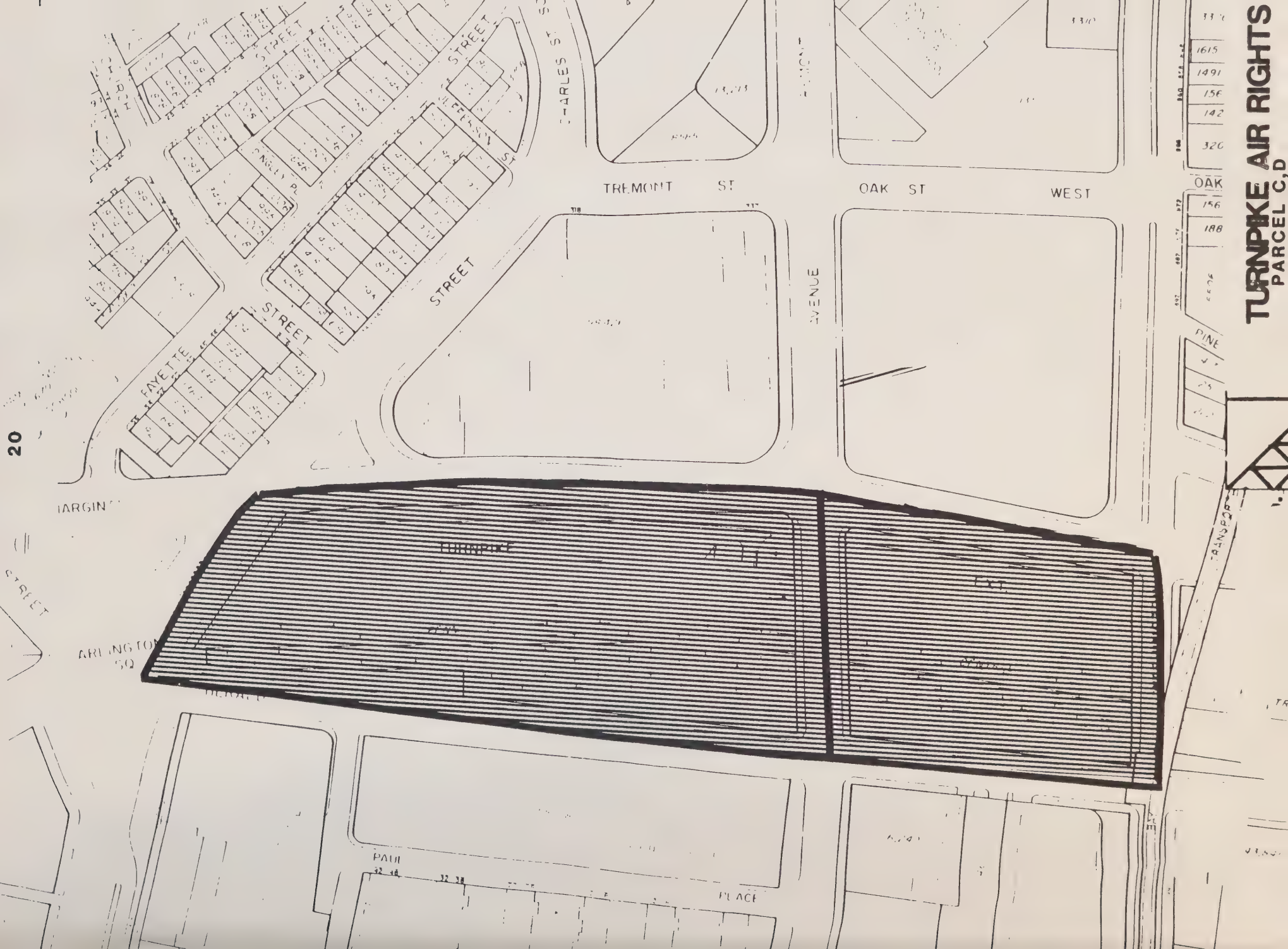


FORT POINT CHANNEL
PIER 1
PIER 2
PIER 4
COMMONWEALTH PIER 5
BOSTON FISH
NORTHERN AV
SOUTH STATION
ATLANTIC AV
DORCHESTER AV
MIDWAY ST
NECCO ST
BINNEY ST
PIERS
FARNSWORTH ST
PITTSBURG ST
STILLINGS ST
SUMMER ST
AVON ST
BEDFORD ST
EAST ST
FARMER ST
HAWLEY ST
SUMNER ST
HANOVER ST
HENNET PL
THACHER ST
HUNTRESS ST
HUDSON ST
ATLANTIC AV
DORCHESTER AV
BROAD ST
GILLETTE
GRANITE
SENECA PL
ONEIDA PL
OSWEGO ST
GENESEE ST
ROCHESTER PL
TROY ST
DAVIS PL
ROSE ST
BRISTOL ST
THAYER ST
LAGRANGE ST
DOVER ST
LAFAYETTE PL
LAGRANGE PL
LROTCH PLGD
RANDOLPH ST
SAVOY ST
PARK ST
MALDEN ST
UNION PARK ST
SO BAY
FOURTH ST
M-1
M-2
M-4
B-1
B-2
I-2
H-1
L-.5
RAMP
VIALUCT
FARGO ST
NECCO ST
BINNEY ST
MIDWAY ST
GILLETTE
GRANITE
BROAD ST
LOUIS ST
BULLOCK ST
KYD ST
HER ST
BUTLER ST
W ST
FIRST ST
W. SECOND
SECOND
THIRD
ATHENS
BROADWAY
CROWLEY-FLAHERTY
HAYES WAY
ROGERS WAY
SILVER
GOLD
BOWEN
TUDOR
SEVENTH
EIGHTH
W NINTH
FIFTH
SIXTH
FOURTH
LORING
OLD
CT
PL
ST
WAY




**TURNPIKE AIR RIGHTS**

PARCEL on MASS. AV/BOYLSTON ST


TURNPIKE AIR RIGHTS
PARCEL C,D
TREMONT ST
OAK ST
WEST
STREET
AVENUE
PLACE
20